Assignment 1: User Manual (10% of final grade)

See Schedule for due dates. See Assignments section on Blackboard for where to submit files.

Objective: This assignment will be our only case of "technical writing." The remaining assignments are considered "scientific writing." According to the Society for Technical Communication, these writers "communicate about technical or specialized topics, such as computer applications, medical procedures, or environmental regulations. And they provide instructions for products and services." For this assignment, Lego wants to sell a new construction toy. Your job is to create this new toy and write the instruction manual for it.

Creating Lego Block Instructions

1. You will each be able to select 25 Lego blocks.

2. Construct "something" with your 25 blocks. Yes, you must use all of them.

3. Write step-by-step instructions (at least 700 words) on how to build your "project" as your user manual rough draft.

4. Although **you cannot use visuals**, you should use any other design elements (headings, subheadings, chunking, numbering, bulleted lists) that may make your instructions clearer.

Writing Tips …

Your instruction manual should have the following (pretty standard) sections:

• Introduction and Background – Define the toy that will be assembled. Briefly list the major tasks to be accomplished. Provide needed context; explain what the reader will need to do and why he/she will do it. This allows the reader to figure out much of the procedure in its entirety. This appears before the steps, but it is best to write it after you write the discussion of the steps.

• Special Notices – Note any cautions, warnings, or dangers for the reader. Cautions alert the reader to any potential for ruining the outcome or for damage to the product. Warnings alert readers to any potentially dangerous situations or the possibility for minor injury. Dangers call attention to extremely hazardous situations, such as the potential for irreparable injury or loss of life.

• Equipment and Supplies – List the equipment and supplies the reader should have before beginning the task. Be sure to specify sizes, types, models as appropriate.

• Discussion of the Steps – Explain the actions the reader must take to accomplish each step in the procedure. Provide specific directions and describe the result for each step in the process. Transition coherently from one step to the next. Group steps together into stages or modules, giving the instructions for assembling each module separately, then explaining how to assemble

the modules into the whole object. Use headings. Use numbered and bulleted lists and the imperative "mood."

• Conclusion – Briefly summarize the steps in the process and direct the reader to any additional information, if necessary.

- Include a References page in APA format if you use outside source info; outside sources are not required for this assignment.

On Testing Day:

1. Bring the unassembled toy kit which consists of:

    a. your Lego blocks

        (1) put them in your small bag

        (2) put **only your name** on the bag

        (3) do not reveal the final product in any way

    b. Post your user manual rough draft to discussion board

2. Repeat the following twice:

    a. Take another student's components and open a copy of the manual.

    b. Following the manual's instructions, assemble the components.

    c. As you work, insert comments on your classmate's manual any questions that you wish it had answered, any assumptions that you had to make, or any other aspects that were not clear. On the rough drafts of BOTH your classmates' essays, provide written feedback using the peer review sheet created during class. The peer review sheet will be uploaded to the Assignment 1 folder in the Assignments section on Blackboard.

    d. When you're finished, find the creator/author, show him/her your product, and let the creator make notes on any discrepancies between your assembly and what he or she intended.

    f. Return the pieces and the manual to the front of the room for the next reviewer.

Revision:

Take your toy kit and download your classmate's peer reviews, review the comments produced by the testing, and revise the manual. Submit to Blackboard.

Essay Rewrite:

If you receive less than 90% (7.65 points) on the final draft, you can submit a rewrite within one week of the final draft due date. The essay final draft grade will become an average of the grade you received on the original essay final draft and the grade you received on the essay rewrite.

Requirements: At least 700 words with a clean, organized layout. Outside sources are optional; if you use outside sources, cite them and include a References page in APA style.

Submitting and Checking for Feedback:

Submitting essay rough drafts:

Go to the Assignments section on Blackboard. Click on the Assignment 1. Find "Assignment 1 Rough Drafts," and click on the link. Click reply to post and attach your rough draft for in-class revision and editing work.

Submitting peer review feedback:

Go to the Assignments section on Blackboard. Click on Assignment 1. Open "Peer Review Worksheet." Click on the "Assignment 1 Rough Drafts" link, and locate your peer review classmates (peer review groups are posted to Announcements and emailed to the class). Open your peer review classmate's essay, and answer the questions they've inserted to the best of your ability. Do not rewrite their work. Close with a two statements: strengths and areas of to improve. Save and post to as a reply to your classmate's post.

Checking peer review feedback:

Go to the Assignments section. Locate "Assignment 1 Rough Drafts," and click on the link. Find your post, and your classmates' posts underneath it for their feedback.

Submitting essay final drafts:

Go to the Assignments section on Blackboard. Click on the Assignment 1. Find Assignment 1 Final Draft, and click "View/Complete." Follow the steps, and make sure the file is one of the file types it accepts.

Checking essay final draft feedback:

Go to the Assignments section on Blackboard. Click on the Assignment 1. Find Assignment 1 Final Draft, and click "View/Complete." Scroll to the bottom of the screen and open the file I posted there. My comments are inserted on the file.

Submitting essay rewrites and checking feedback:

Go to the Assignments section on Blackboard. Click on the Assignment 1. Find Assignment 1 Essay Rewrite, and click “View/Complete.” Follow the steps, and make sure the file is one of the file types it accepts.

Go to the Assignments section on Blackboard. Click on the Assignment 1. Find Assignment 1 Essay Rewrite, and click “View/Complete.” Scroll to the bottom of the screen and open the file I posted there. My comments are inserted on the file.